

Education for girls in zambia education essay



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Although access has been increased over the years and in local community schools in Zambia, there are still a large proportion of school-age girls who are not in school. There is need therefore for the government to expand its primary education system in order to capture all the school-age children who are not in school.

Girls in Zambia are six times more likely to contract HIV than boys. Child mortality is a reality for many during childbirth and in the first five years of their children's lives. Women are dependent on their husbands for financial support to provide for both their children and themselves and so many women must put up with being treated badly. Women in Zambia do not have many opportunities and those that they do have they must fight for. Access to education is very important in changing this. An educated woman is more likely to take her child to a clinic than a non-educated one. She is less likely to contract HIV and will be more likely to be able to support herself and her family. (News)

Zambia's Education Deputy Minister Clement Sinyinda said " time has come for Government and its partners in the education sector to renew pledges made and to see how much progress has been made in meeting the year's objectives on education." (Lusakatimes)

Mr. Sinyinda said " there should be tangible evidence to show that challenges in accessing and completing school faced by the vulnerable children, especially girls, have been resolved." (Lusakatimes)

He revealed that issues of girl's education in terms of access and completion rates still cause a great challenge.

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Mr. Sinyinda was speaking in Lusaka today at the official opening of the 5th Campaign for Female Education-(CAMFED) Zambia Annual General Meeting.

An educationist in Kawambwa says the Ministry of Education has introduced some interventions to encourage the girl-child to continue with education.

Kawambwa District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), Ngosa Katoti, said this in

Kawambwa during the dissemination workshop of the Vision 2030 and the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP). (Lusakatimes)

Mr. Katoti says government has introduced interventions such as Programme for

advancement of girls' education. (Lusakatimes)

He says government was worried with the girls' education as their completion levels

are bad compared to the boys', hence the introduction of some interventions.

Mr. Kakoti pointed out that there are no plans by the Ministry of Education to reduce the enrolment age from seven years to either five or six.

He explained that at the age of five or six, children are not matured enough in

thinking to enable them start receiving training. Mr. Kakoti noted that, because of this, the enrolment age cannot be reduced from seven. (Mumba)

He was answering a question from a member of the entourage from the Ministry of

Finance, who wanted to know why government cannot reduce the enrolment age to either five or six especially for the girl child that grows faster.

However, some stakeholders also observed that girls grow faster and that it would be

better to enroll them at the age of either five or six before they start involving

themselves into illicit activities that lead to pregnancies. (Online)

However, not all parents can afford to send their children to private schools as the fees are unaffordable for an average family. For example an average private school in Kamanga compound, one of satellite homes research locations charges ZMK250, 000 per term. Other challenges of education for girls in Zambia include overcrowded classes and a very low teacher-pupil ratio. (Online)

The policy of Free Basic Education (FBE), announced by the government in 2002 is progressive insofar as eliminating user fees. However, the 2006 study entitled, " How free is free education?" by JCTR revealed that free education in Zambia was not completely free due to indirect costs such as project fees, transport costs, money for food, and the cost of purchasing

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school uniforms (or even just decent clothes) and other needed materials.

(Online)

Nevertheless, this policy has contributed towards progress to Zambia's attainment of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Number 2 on "Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015." The main target of this goal is to ensure that by 2015, children of both genders will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. (Lusakatimes)

According to the 2011 Millennium Development Goals Progress Report for Zambia, net enrolment of Zambian girls in primary education increased from 80 per cent in 1990 to 102 per cent in 2009. This was mostly due to "increased construction of schools, the removal of school fees in 2002 and the adoption of Free Basic Education and Re-entry Policies." (otsu)

There was also an increase of Zambian girls in primary school completion rates from 64 per cent in 1990 to 91.7 per cent in 2009. Despite the primary education target of ensuring that all boys and girls complete primary education has been reached, adult literacy declined from 79 per cent in 1990 to 70 per cent in 2004 and the completion rate in secondary school is still low at 19.4 per cent in 2009. (otsu)

Zambia's minister of Education in an interview said "Perhaps the biggest concern in relation to the policy of free education is the quality of the education being provided. While the goal on achieving universal education will be met by 2015 in terms of numbers, the challenges of inadequate learning materials, low teacher salaries and the high teacher pupil ratio compromise the quality of education being offered." (Online)

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Often, we hear of high teacher pupil ratio in individual schools. As of 2006, the national average was as high as 57 pupils to 1 teacher. In such an environment, it is difficult for a teacher to pay attention to the needs of every pupil. (Mumba)

Rather, focus on improving standards of education and prepare people to effectively contribute to the growth of the economy. As the 2011 MDG Progress Report notes, “ the emphasis needs to be on the quality of education, achieving higher completion rates for girls in secondary education and improving access to post-secondary education and skills training.” (Lusakatimes)

How do you think the Zambia’s education system could be improved so that it contributes to meaningful development?

In my opinion I think the only way Zambia can improve its education system so that it could contribute meaningful development and reduce lack of adequate education for Zambian girls is to create public free schools whereby education is free for girls even until secondary school in order to reduce illiteracy rates in Zambia and ensure for a bright future for Zambia.

There are already schools built in order to ensure that Zambian girls go to school for free one is Nyamphande.

Nyamphande is a community school and orphanage that provides education to 650 Zambian girls of all ages free of charge. It is a rural community school run by volunteers from the local community to benefit the children who

cannot afford to go to school. Without Nyamphande these girls would not have any access to education. (News)

In my opinion I think that adequate education for Zambian girls would go a long way in creating awareness for HIV/AIDS, if more girls are aware through education, I think it would go a long way in reducing women literacy and girls contacting HIV/AIDS.

The Chart Below shows the percentage of women in some African countries who know main ways to prevent HIV transmission by education level.

<http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/women/report/images/chart3-gra.gif>

There are multiple benefits of Zambian girl's education such as:

Reducing the risk of young Zambian girls from contacting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV.

Reducing poverty: In Zambia, rural women with no education are twice as likely to be living in extreme poverty as those who have benefited from eight or more years of education.

Improving the health of women and their children: Educated mothers make more use of health care facilities, including the health services that effectively prevent fatal childhood diseases. Worldwide, the risk of a child dying prematurely is reduced by around 8 per cent for each year that its mother spent in primary school.

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Delaying Marriage: In Zambia, increasing education has played a vital role in reducing child marriage, in part by ensuring that girls have access to the information and social networks that can protect them.

Reducing Female Genital Cutting (FGC): Educated women are less than half as likely to be subjected to FGC and four times more likely to oppose FGC for their daughters.

Increasing Self-Confidence & Decision-Making Power: Evidence from Zambia shows that, women continue to be constrained by great decision making power in the family and the wider community.

Zambian Girls after initiation tend to be interested in boyfriends and sexual relationships rather than school studies. Pregnancy and early marriage are the second most common reasons why girls leave school. In Zambian culture, pregnancy and child bearing are regarded as the ultimate fulfillment of womanhood, particularly when accompanied by marriage. Stereotyped gender roles have been strongly maintained. (otsu)

At the family level in Zambia, girls are expected to do domestic chores and to take care of younger children. Parents tend to view boys education as ultimately more cost effective, since girls usually join their husband's household upon marriage, leaving their own homes. (otsu)

In my opinion I think gender inequality in Zambia is a really big issue that needs to be addressed before the country can move forward. I think girls should be allowed the quality education boys are allowed this is the only way to decrease the country's rising poverty and HIV levels.

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